AN EPISTLE TO ALL Young Convinced FRIENDS,

WHOM

The Lord hath reached by His mighty Power, and ſeparated from the World, and turned their Hearts, ſo as to forſake Father, and Mother, Wife, and Children, for his Name ſake.

By way of Exhortation and Encouragement, by one whom the Lord hath greatly Encouraged, and fulfilled the ſaying of the Prophet *Malachi*, by turning the Hearts of his Parents and Dear Relations to Him.

LONDON, Printed and Sold by *T. Sowle*, in *White-Hart-Court* in *Gracious-Street*. 1696.

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By way of Exhortation and Encouragement, by one whom the Lord hath greatly Encouraged, and fulfilled the saying of the Prophet Malachi, by turning the Hearts of his Parents and Dear Relations to Him.

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AN EPISTLE TO ALL Young Convinced Friends, &c.

Dear Friend,

WHoever thou art, in the Love of God was my Heart enlarged to write to thee this following Account, that thou may'st be encouraged to abide in the Patience and Hope of that which thy Natural Eyes cannot behold, to wit, the Great and Wonderful Work of the Great Invisible God, which in his own time he will perfect to his own Praise, and thy Comfort, and as thou dost stand in thy own Nothingness, with the Eye of thy Mind single unto the Lord, thou may'st come to behold that Work done by him, which all thy power is not able to do, although thou be never so earnest in it, for the Lord will do his own Work himself, and thou must stand still, and wait his time, having thy Eye to the inward power of God, to keep and preserve thee in patience, to bear what Exercises thou may'st meet with, from those who are, (as to the outward) very near and dear unto thee, that thou may'st, by thy patient bearing of those Reproaches and Afflictions, thou may'st meet with from them, which may seem to thee very hard, reach the Witness in their Consciences, whether Father, or Mother, or Husband, or Wife, or whoever they be, so that thou may'st become a Preacher of Righteousness in thy Conversation to them, which speaks with a far louder Voice than words can do, and is more effectual to reach to the Witness in

their Consciences, than a great many words are, though words, (as thou dost wait for the Lord to fit thy words before thou dost speak them) thou wilt find them of advantage to those to whom they are spoken; and though they be never so few, yet as they are spoken by thee in the savoury Life, they shall not return to thee in vain, but in the Lord's time effect the end for which thou wer't made to speak them.

So, dear Friend, I being at my Labour, at my own Home in *Canterbury*, upon the first of the Twelfth Month 1695. and considering the great Sufferings of my dear Parents, whom the Lord hath born up in it in a wonderful manner, beyond what we could conceive, before it came on them, I became concern'd to write on this wise:

The Impropriator in the Parish of *Ash* in the County of *Kent*, Sued, for a Demand of 20*s.* for Tythes, to a Sequestration, and then took and stripped them; so that although they were both Antient People, they left them not a Bed to lye on, nor a Blanket to cover themselves, not scarce any Necessaries to succour themselves; so that for a demand of 20*s.* they took upwards of the Value of 57*l.* so that they were for some time compelled to Lodge on Straw; but the Lord's power was felt to make hard things easie to them.

So now, dear Friend, I shall (as one who have in my Measure tasted of the large Love of God to me in my Heart, and known him to bear me up, when tryed) give this short account to thee of my Tryals with my Parents, and of the Encouragement the Lord hath given me, that thou may'st not faint in thy Mind, nor be discouraged at the Frowns of thy Friends, and near Relations, which lay on me as a Concern to give forth this Testimony of the Lord's Dealings with me, and my dear Relations, since my first Convincement, which was about Twelve or Thirteen Years ago; when I was but a Lad, the Lord brake in by his mighty Power, and filled my Heart with his Judgments, and did Rip up all the whole Course of my Life, and made me to bow to them, though against my will; for I would fain have put the Day of the Lord's Visitation off longer, but the more I did endeavour, the heavier were the Lord's Judgments on me, so that I was forced to bow under them before I could find Mercy, for the Lord wrought in me by his own inward Power at the first, and not by any outward

ward Instrument, and caused me to know Nights of Sorrow, and Days of Mourning; and it was to me a time of deep Exercise, though but a Child, (as it were) and my Fellow-servant, who was Apprentice to the same Master with whom I was, though he was a Lad naturally of a more sober Behaviour than my self, yet the Lord made my Convincement of good effect to him, so that he was reached to and convinced, and by the mighty Power of God, remains to this day an Honest Sober Friend: Thus did the Lord by his Invisible Power give me a Companion, and brought us both forth to bear a Testimony for his Name within a very little time after our Convincement, which was in a time of great Persecution; for we were both required by Two Magistrates to Swear Allegiance to the King, but the Lord by his mighty Power bore us up, who were as poor little Children; so that we stood as Innocent Lambs before them, and were both by them Committed to Prison, where we were born up by the Lord's Power, till in a little time we were delivered by them out again, and then my Parents made suit for the residue of my time of Apprenticeship, and took me (with Consent of my Master) Home to them, and set me up of my Trade by them, which was a Shoemaker; then was my Father a Follower of the Priest, and all his Family; so then began on me a very sore Exercise from them, it being still a time of hot Persecution; so I was in my Father's Family, when but about 18 Years, (or little more) of Age, as a Gazing-stock to them all, or as a Sparrow alone upon the House-top: And many times my Father would labour to have me with him to hear the Priest, but the Lord kept me; so that when my Father saw he could not prevail, he would then break out into Displeasure and Anger against me; and sometimes if he could catch any thing against me, or any of my Friends, then he would cast that on me; and sometimes I have expected him to have beaten me, but the Lord's Power did restrain him from it; and some would be advising him to take me by force with him to hear the Priest; but I hearing of it, was made to answer to it, *That although my Father might carry me by force there, he might bring a greater Burthen on himself than he was aware of, for it was out of his power to stop me from speaking, if I should by such means have anything from the Lord to say there*; so he was stopped there also, and did not proceed

ceed in that; but in a very little time the Priest of the Parish, for not coming to hear him, did Excommunicate me, which was no small Terror to my Father, so that he began to be outragious at me, but the Lord did bear me up under it, and did give me a very large Encouragement, so that I beheld him to be at work in the Heart of my Dear Mother, and she was made to take a part, and a share of Exercise with me; yet thus my Father finding that way to fail, made proof of another with me, and did in some measure prevail on me, which was this, he desired me to stay at Home upon a First-day, and not go to the Meeting, in expectation of my Sister coming to see them, who was then a Servant, which I did, but she came not, and I was greatly burthened in my Spirit for giving way in that case, and was (till I came to another Meeting) like a Man shut up in a Dungeon, and found very hard work to get to the next Meeting, as if my work had been almost to begin again: My Father seeing he could not prevail with me again, notwithstanding a great deal of Labour he took to perswade me, and had got strength too by my yielding to him before, he then seemed to be more outragious than usual, so that I did expect I should have been severely beaten by him when I came home from the Meeting; but when I was gotten clear of him, I went like a Man Travelling for his Life, and I had no sooner set me down in a Retiredness to the Lord in the Meeting, but the Lord (although in silence, as to words) outwardly did set open the Stream of Life in my Soul, so that I was taken up above the fears or frowns of any Mortal, and felt in my return home that Life and Love to spring in my Heart, that I could have laid my self under the Soles of my Fathers Feet; but when I came home (contrary to my expectation) I found my Father very loving to me, and the Lord had gotten a belief in me that he would bow my Father, and bring him in obedience to the Truth, which I did upon occasion tell to my Mother, and I did then begin to find my Father to be something condescending, and sometimes would be ready to bargain with me, that if I would go with him once, he would go with me, but the Lord preserved me out of that Snare, and in a little time I did get my Father and Mother to the Meeting, but my Father was ashamed to be seen or met by any coming from the Meeting, but my Mother hath continued ever

since

since, and my Father would confess to me it was the Truth, and the Lord did begin to work on him, and to bow him in some measure in obedience to Truth; then was his Love to me more than before, and he was then glad of Opportunities of Meetings, and the Lord was with him, and his power did bear him up, and this was a joyful time to me, to behold the Lord's Visitation to both my Parents; and in a little time the Lord brought in my Eldest Sister in Obedience to Truth, and then I had Three Companions, but the Out-cry of People was, I had deceived my Parents; but the Lord's Power did work wonderfully, and brought my Father still further and further, and fitted him more and more, so that now he is as an Instrument in the Lord's Hand, to bear a publick Testimony in Meetings; then a little after the Lord brought my two Brothers into Obedience to his Truth; and then my Eldest Brother was under a great Travel and Exercise, beyond I think any of us; and as for my Youngest Sister, within about a Years time after, the Lord laid his Hand heavy upon her, and made her to come forth as a Monument of his Mercy, through the midst of Judgments; so that now we could all sit down together at the Lord's Table, and drink of the one Cup; and we have several times felt the Lord to break the Bread of Life in our Souls, and living Praises with one accord, as with one Heart, to go forth to the Lord from the Arisings of Life in our Hearts by the Lord's Power, in which we have been made to sit together in the Enjoyment thereof.

So, dear Friend, I being in the Love of God drawn forth to thee after this manner, not to set forth the Praise of my Relations, nor lay open their weakness, nor to glory in any of my own, but in the Lord, who hath wrought wonderfully; so that of a poor little weak one, even as a Worm before the Lord, I can behold his Hand to be full of Blessings, and his Increasing Government to be endless; so that thou may'st be Encouraged, whoever thou art, that be in the like Exercises, this I leave to thee as an Encouragement to be true of Heart, and faithful to the Lord, and to stand in the true patience of the Saints, that thou may'st know an overcoming of the Enemy in thy own Heart, and so in the Lord's time may be made a Conqueror of those who may oppose thee, by having thy Conversation as becometh the Truth; then

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the Lord, as thou do'ſt herein abide, and keep'ſt thy Mind cloſe to the Lord in a true ſtability, thou wilt find him to bear thee up, and to make hard things eaſie to thee, and to level the Mountains before thee, and make the Rough-ways ſmooth; and ſo (by a retired waiting in a holy Reſignation of thy Will, in a ſubjection to the Lord) thou wilt feel his Power to keep and preſerve thee freſh and green, and the Enjoyment of his preſence will be to thee as Dew on the tender Graſs; therefore in all the whole Conduct of thy Life, let the dread of the Great Everlaſting God be on thee, which is only able to keep thee in the Hour of Temptation, which will come upon the whole World, to try them that dwell therein: Oh therefore ſee that thy Building be on the unmoveable Rock, which will endure the fierceſt Winds and Storms thou may'ſt meet with; and when any Tryals or Exerciſes do ariſe, then art thou to come to ſtilneſs and quietneſs in thy Mind, thou wilt know an Overcoming of that part in thee which may be ſubject to Heat or Paſſion, or to Doubts or Diſtruſtings, and ſo in the Morning of the Day that God hath cauſed to dawn on thee, in which thou haſt (in thy Meaſure) beheld the Bright and Morning Star, if thou do'ſt continue faithful, thou wilt come to behold the Sun of Righteouſneſs to ariſe with healing under his Wings; and as thou doſt continue faithful, the Lord will bring thee to the Meridian of the Day, in which thou ſhalt feel the brightneſs of his Rays to warm thy Heart, and make thee ſtrong; ſo that at the cloſe of the Day thou may'ſt come to be gathered out of a troubleſome World into Everlaſting Peace and Joy: So having eaſed my Spirit, and cleared my Conſcience, I ſhall commit thee, with my own Soul, to the Grace of God which was ſufficient for the Apoſtle *Paul*: And bleſſed be the Lord *we* have in our Meaſures known the ſufficiency of it; and ſhall conclude with my Breathing to the Lord for the preſervation of all who have taſted of the good Word of God, and of the Powers of the World to come.

John Love, the Younger.

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